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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8137
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0179
RHMFISS/USAFCENT SHAW AFB SC PRIORITY
RBDHDZA/COMUSNAVCENT PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 000581

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AL-JAZEERA EXPLAINS LESSENERED AL QAEDA COVERAGE

Classified By: Amb. Joseph LeBaron, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) During an August 12 office call by visiting Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Member Perry Cammack, Al-Jazeera Network (AJN) Managing Director Wadah Khanfar said the network still receives tapes from Al Qaeda but doesn't bother airing them or mentioning them because "Usama bin Laden has lost all credibility among Muslims and is no longer the symbol he once was." Khanfar elaborated that Al Qaeda's brutality in Iraq has "destroyed" the organization and its claim to speak for Muslims.

¶2. (C) Comment: AJN's reduced coverage of Al Qaeda may be meant to curry favor with the government of Iraq, as part of its strategy for gaining permission to re-open its bureau in that country. That is something Khanfar has been negotiating hard for with the Iraqis for several months.

¶3. (C) While AJN may have backed off on its coverage of Al Qaeda and associated tapes, the past month has seen a marked increase in its coverage of the Taliban, including interviews with Taliban representatives. Septel will report the results of a separate conversation with Khanfar regarding AJN's renewed interest in the Taliban.

¶3. (U) Mr. Cammack did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.
LeBaron